

Handout 1:

From *A Long Walk Home* by Nelson Mandela

Letters advising these chiefs and headmen of a meeting were dispatched from the regent, and soon the Great Place became alive with important visitors and travelers from all over Thembuland. The guests would gather in the courtyard in front of the regent's house and he would open the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and explaining why he had summoned them. From that point on, he would not utter another word until the meeting was nearing its end.

Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. *There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was heard, chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and laborer. People spoke without interruption and the meetings lasted for many hours. The foundation of self-government was that all men were free to voice their opinions and equal in their value as citizens. (Women, I am afraid, were deemed second-class citizens.)*

As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the Great Place. I have always endeavored to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Oftentimes, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion. I always remember the regent's axiom: a leader, he said, is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.

Teacher explanation:

The above narrative of an experience Nelson Mandela had was very influential in how he saw society and the governing of its people. He made a choice to include people in discussion before “venturing” his own opinion. This was a choice he made.

How did this choice influence his actions after he came out of prison?

Speech by Nelson Mandela to the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa

January 12, 1962

The movement for the boycott of South African goods and for the imposition of economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa has served to highlight most effectively the despotic structure of the power that rules South Africa, and has given tremendous inspiration to the liberation movement in our country. It is particularly gratifying to note that the four independent African states which are part of this conference, namely, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Tanganyika, are enforcing diplomatic and economic sanctions against South Africa. We also thank all those states that have given asylum and assistance to South African refugees of all shades of political beliefs and opinion. The warm affection with which South African freedom fighters are received by democratic countries all over the world, and the hospitality so frequently showered upon us by governments and political organisations, has made it possible for some of our people to escape persecution by the South African government, to travel freely from country to country and from continent to continent, to canvass our point of view and to rally support for our cause. We are indeed extremely grateful for this spontaneous demonstration of solidarity and support, and sincerely hope that each and every one of us will prove worthy of the trust and confidence the world has in us.

Excerpts from *A Long Walk to Freedom* – concerning Mandela's childhood.

The principal of Healdtown was Dr. Arthur Wellington, a stout and stuffy Englishman who boasted of his connection to the duke of Wellington. At the outset of assemblies, Dr. Wellington would walk onstage and say, in his deep bass voice, "I am the descendant of the great duke of Wellington, aristocrat, statesman, and general, who crushed the Frenchman Napoleon at Waterloo and thereby saved civilization for Europe-- and for you, the natives." At this, we would all enthusiastically applaud, each of us profoundly grateful that a descendant of the great duke of Wellington would take the trouble to educate natives such as ourselves. The educated Englishman was our model; what we aspired to be were "black Englishmen," as we were sometimes derisively called. We were taught -- and believed -- that the best ideas were English ideas, the best government was English government, and the best men were Englishmen.